



**MEDICAL TREATMENT FACILITY
USNS MERCY (T-AH 19)
FPO AP 96672-4090**

MERCY NEWSLETTER

July 31, 2006

Vol. 1, No. 03

Mercy Crew Leaves Positive Impressions

Off Nias Island, Indonesia - Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) Mercy crew, embarked on board U.S. Naval Hospital Ship USNS MERCY (T-AH 19), continue to leave positive impressions at the sites they visit. The Military Sealift Command (MSC) ship departed her home port of San Diego on April 24 en-route for South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands to conduct humanitarian medical treatment.

While in homeport San Diego MERCY is in a reduced operating status (ROS). MERCY's crew numbers about 60 military personnel and 25 civilian mariners who maintain the MERCY in a ready status to be deployable on a 96-hour notice. But, when deployment orders are received, MERCY is placed on full operating status (FOS) and her ROS crew is augmented by the military's best medical personnel and civilian mariners.

"You are doing good and great things," Commander Task Unit (CTU) 10.2.1 Navy CAPT Bradley Martin told an 'All Hands' gathering on the ship's mess decks. The gathering provided all hands a mission update and also celebrated "Hump Day," the tradition of getting together to recognize the half way point of a deployment.

"You have helped tens-of-thousands of people and influenced many more; more than 50,000 in the Republic of the Philippines and more than 3,500 in Bangladesh," Commanding Officer of the Medical Treatment Facility Navy CAPT Joseph Moore told the audience. "We are on the second-leg, the Indonesian mission, of this deployment...All is going quite well and great things can continue to happen," CAPT Moore added. "Republic of the Philippines and Bangladesh are behind us with several stops yet in front of us. We are focused on the task at hand, and this joint-mission team is working well together."



"Often times when we hit a mission port the work days become quite long preparing for the following day's mission," Navy Chief Petty Officer Robin Roth said. Roth is a hospital corpsman pharmacy technician and is permanently stationed at Naval Medical Center San Diego where she is the Senior Enlisted Leader for the pharmacy there. "Expectations change from day to day which means that medications for the following day may need to be changed the night before the mission," Roth added. MERCY left San Diego with all expected needed medicines for this deployment.

“Many have had the opportunity to go ashore and witness firsthand the area and people we are here to help,” Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Moore said. Moore is a hospital corpsman and assigned full-time to the Nursing Services Department on board MERCY. “When I stop and think about where MERCY was the first part of April--very few people on board and just a few contractors getting us ready for this deployment--I am amazed that the MERCY Team has come together so well to make this humanitarian mission successful,” Moore said.

“I am not a hospital corpsman, yet I feel that I’m as integral a member as everyone else,” Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Mario Medina said. “The MERCY Supply Department spent many long days prior to deployment ensuring that the ship left...with what was expected to be needed during deployment. That would keep any possible delays on the delivery of medicinal supplies down to a minimum.” Medina, a storekeeper, is also ROS crew member on MERCY.

“Whether we are conducting the mission ashore or on board, I have not seen one unhappy recipient to date,” Chief Petty Officer Larry Chase said. Chase is an operations specialist, assigned as a CTU staff member, and is permanently assigned to Commander, Amphibious Squadron SEVEN. “Please don’t misunderstand me. There are many considerations and challenges in an operation of this magnitude: weather, logistics and personnel and their transportation to and from shore, personnel protection, and communications. But when all segments work correctly, it is like a well-tuned race car; a lot of energy waiting to be released,” Chase added.

Air Force Senior Master Sergeant Richard McCoy, who is permanently assigned to 36th Medical Support Squadron, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam and works in the MERCY Medical Operations Center said, “When I stand back and think about all that occurs throughout the course of a day of operations, I’m proud that we get our people and patients ashore and back again, with their mission supplies. It is often a challenge, but teamwork makes it all happen successfully.”

Petty Officer 2nd Class Brant Golden, a MERCY ROS crew member said, “Being on board MERCY fulltime, even when we are not operational, makes me admire and appreciate the ability of our leadership to bring more than 700 service members from all services and several allied countries together and make us work like an expensive watch. The whole operation on board MERCY is like a ballet; it just comes together and works smoothly through team work.” Golden, an Aviation Boatswain’s Mate (Fuels), is a San Diego-native and carries on the Navy tradition of his family, as his grandfather commanded several San Diego Navy commands, the last of which was the aircraft carrier Constellation. “I’m extremely happy and proud that I can do my part to carry on our family’s rich heritage of military service,” Golden added.



Commodore Brad Martin is the Mission Commander for this MERCY humanitarian deployment. He brought a staff of nine with him to help coordinate the various aspects of the mission. MERCY is divided into two large operational commands which must work as one. MTF MERCY and MSC make up United States Hospital Ship USNS MERCY. MSC cares for and operates MERCY the ship while MTF operates MERCY the hospital; both work together to make United States Hospital Ship USNS MERCY (T-AH 19), the deployable humanitarian platform.

The MTF is under the command of Navy CAPT Joseph Moore and has traditionally been augmented by medical professionals from the Navy. This humanitarian mission has been unique in that the mission has also employed augments from the United States Public Health Service, Army and Air Force, as well as allied military healthcare personnel from Canada, Australia, Indonesia, and the Government of India. Additionally, volunteer doctors and nurses from non-governmental organizations (NGO's) such as Project Hope, Aloha Medical Mission, Tzu Chi and Operation Smile have joined the mission at various stages.

The MSC is commanded by Merchant Mariner Master Robert Wiley and is made up of civilian mariners and temporarily assigned Merchant Mariner Academy cadets from several schools across the United States. For the cadets, this deployment is similar to the U.S. Naval Academy cadet's Summer Cruise aboard U.S. Navy ships.



While MERCY's primary mission is to serve as an over-the-horizon medical platform for U.S. and allied military personnel, she is deployed to carry out her secondary mission, that of humanitarian assistance and theater security cooperation, this year in the South and Southeast Asia and Pacific Island nations area, at the invitation of the host nations. MERCY is conducting medical and dental assistance, coordinated with and approved by the host nation, including general surgery, ophthalmologic surgery, basic medical evaluation and treatment, preventive medicine treatment, dental screenings and treatment, optometry screenings, eyewear distribution and public health screenings, as well as civil engineering and

community service projects. MERCY has conducted humanitarian missions in Zamboanga, Jolo and Tawi Tawi, Republic of the Philippines, Chittagong, Bangladesh and Simeulu and Nias islands, Indonesia.

Two MERCY crewmembers who have been ashore several times are Petty Officer 3rd Class Steven Kennan and Hospitalman Fritzi Marroquin, both temporarily assigned to MERCY from Naval Medical Center San Diego. Kennan, a religious programs specialist, said that his time ashore has been spent on the Community Relations projects in the various areas that MERCY has visited. "I am always amazed at how our neighbors in the area of the world get by with what many in the U.S. could consider nothing. And quite often those we help are wearing smiles, even before we have the opportunity to work on them. That is so very encouraging," Kennan said. Marroquin added, "I am happy for what I have been blessed to have, yet I am extremely sad for the conditions under which my world neighbors have to live in."

By
Journalist Chief Stephen K. Robinson
MERCY Public Affairs Officer

COMMANDING OFFICER'S CORNER

At the time of our last newsletter, we were finishing operations in the Philippines, and were off to Singapore for a well deserved rest. Many of the crew took time out to visit the many sites available in this beautiful city, arguably the most modern in Asia. Others enjoyed simply getting on dry land to work out, walk to the Navy Exchange near the pier, go to the all hands club for lunch, or sit by the pool.

From Singapore we sailed to Bangladesh to conduct operations from 1-8 July. The shallow depths approaching the mouth of the Ganges required us to remain thirty or more nautical miles from shore. Weather cooperated early in the mission, allowing us to air lift 57 children with cleft lip and palate deformities, along with their escorts, 38 Operation Smile volunteers, and twenty eight translators. We were busy moving the crew ashore through inclement weather to the Chittagong Medical College. The doctors, nurses and staff have created tremendous relationships with the staff of the hospital in Chittagong which will last for many years to come.

Four days after departing Bangladesh, we prepared for operations on Simeulue, an island off the coast of Sumatra, Indonesia. This area is quite impoverished, and anything we provided during our short visit, 12-16 July, was appreciated. It was very touching during the opening ceremony to witness the Bupati (Island Governor) symbolically present three patients to the MERCY leadership, signifying their desire and trust in our ability to care for their people. We worked very hard conducting medical and surgical operations, repairing a local orphanage, and taking care of medical emergencies that popped up.

A quick transit overnight on the night of the 16th, and we woke up off the coast of Nias Island. This is the first location on the MERCY mission that had us back visiting a site we worked at last year. We were able to find some of the patients we took care of after the earthquake of March 2005, and they are doing well a year after medical care or orthopedic surgery. Nias has turned out to be our busiest mission, with over 6000 patients seen in six days, from 16-22 July. Immunizations, screening clinics, dental, optometry, education classes, and other venues amounted to over 22,000 patient contact visits.

As I write this letter, we are sailing again, and will arrive in Banda Aceh tomorrow morning. We pass Simeulue Island again this afternoon, and will fly a few patients back to that island that had remained with us to recuperate on the ship from necessary surgery. Banda Aceh looks like another busy stop, and then it's back to Singapore for another well deserved rest.

I ask that you continue to keep us in your prayers, and remain in touch with your loved ones aboard ship. Email is great, but I can't tell you enough how they look forward to, and how excited they are, receiving plain ol' cards, letters and care packages from home.

All the best,

Joseph Moore
CAPTAIN, MC, USN
Commanding Officer, MTF
USNS MERCY (T-AH 19)

MAIL CALL:

Keep those letters and packages to your loved ones coming! The mailing address is:

MTF USNS MERCY (T-AH 19)
CREWMEMBER'S NAME
DEPARTMENT, DIVISION
FPO AP 96672-4090

USNS MERCY WEBSITE

Visit the USNS Mercy website at www.mercy.navy.mil for pictures and information about the ship and its mission.

Another excellent site is:

http://www.cpf.navy.mil/news_images/Mercy/index.htm

OMBUDSMAN'S CORNER

Hello to all of the new families who are just starting to receive our newsletter. Since our last issue we have had some great progress. The Family Support Group has been meeting frequently, once a month on Tuesdays at the USO located downtown across from 3rd & A Streets. We've been discussing upcoming events like our trip to Air and Space Museum in August as well as plans for the homecoming of our deployed loved ones. We all want to have a successful homecoming. If you have any ideas or would like to be involved please contact any one of our Ombudsman or just attend our planning meetings. They are open to all. In more recent events our picnic was a great success. We played games and did arts and crafts with the children. Everyone had a good time.

Mercy Ombudsmen:

Mr. Lynn Slaughter, mercyombudsman@nmcsd.med.navy.mil
Mrs. Charina Villareal mercyombudsman2@nmcsd.med.navy.mil
Mrs. Jasmine Chillious mercyombudsman3@nmcsd.med.navy.mil



Our phone number is: (619) 892-0788. In the case of emergency this phone is on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Non-emergency messages will be returned daily.

We have had some new additions to the Mercy family since the ship has deployed. If you would like to have your baby's birth announcement in our newsletter, please send us the parents' names, baby's name and date of birth.

Please send to: mercyfsg@nmcsd.med.navy.mil
or

Ombudsman USNS MERCY T-AH-19
Ombudsman Work Center
3005 Corbina Alley Street
San Diego, CA 92136



FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP



We had a great time at the picnic on July 15! It was a perfect day at the beach: sunny and warm with a nice breeze. The food was delicious. The kids took turns at the craft, played basketball and volleyball and—of course!—played in the water.

SAVE THE DATES

Join us at the Downtown USO, 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 15, for a free dinner and our FSG planning meeting. For directions go to http://www.usosandiego.org/directions_d.html or call the USO at (619) 235-6503.

Our next family activity will be an outing to the Air and Space Museum in Balboa Park. See the next page for details.

On the evening of September 14 we will be meeting at the Murphy Canyon Chapel for a Reunion Workshop presented by Fleet and Family Support Center. More details will follow in the next newsletter.

Looking for things to do this summer?

Reading contest

Go to your local library and join the reading contest for every ten books read you can receive free prizes like tickets to the zoo, Aero space museum, Pizza hut and more.

Free tour of San Diego

The first Wednesday of every month
9 am to 3:30 pm To register call (619)-556-7404

Free Tuesdays at Balboa

First Tuesday

San Diego museum of natural history
Reuben H. Fleet Science Center
San Diego Model Railroad Museum
Centro cultural de la raza

Second Tuesday

Museum of Photographic Arts
Museum of San Diego History
Veteran's Museum and Memorial Center

Third Tuesday

San Diego Art Institute
San Diego Museum of Art
San Diego Museum of Man
Japanese Friendship garden
Mingei International Museum

Fourth Tuesday

San Diego Aero Space Museum
San Diego Automotive Museum
San Diego Hall of Champions
House of Pacific Relations International Cottages

AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

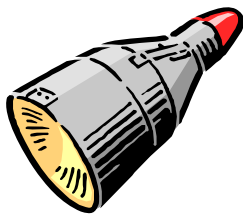
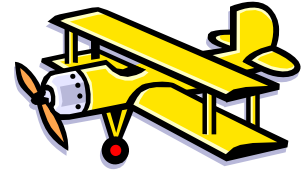
COME AND JOIN US FOR AN OUTING AT BALBOA PARK'S AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM ON THEIR FREE TUESDAY!

Date: Tuesday, August 22, 2006

Time: 11:00 a.m.

Place: San Diego Air and Space Museum, Balboa Park

Bring: If you want, a sack lunch or money to buy lunch at the museum. We can eat in the inner courtyard.



If you have questions, please contact
Laura at moore_mercy@yahoo.com.

